Industries with engines from CFM International was considered/approved by the PIB in its meeting held on 10.11.2004. Pursuant to the PIB approval, final negotiations with the lowest bidder have been initiated. An inter-disciplinary team of IAL is undertaking the negotiations under the overall supervision of an Oversight Committee.

As far as acquisition of Aircrafts by Air India is concerned, in November, 2004, Air India Board approved a fleet acquisition Plan for the period upto 2012/13. This Plan envisages the acquisition of 18 X B737-800 aircraft for its new airline subsidiary Air India Express and 50 Aircraft for Air India. A Project Report for the induction of 18 B737-800W aircraft for Air India Express has been submitted to the Government for approval. Air India has invited offers for the 50 aircraft. Technical and financial bids have been received from M/s. Airbus Industrie and M/s. Boeing for the aircraft and from Rolls Royce, General Electric and Pratt & Whitney for the engines. Techno Economic-cum-Negotiating Committee has evaluated the Technical Bids and submitted its evaluation report to the Management in February 2005.

(c) and (d) The operator is required to train the engineers/pilots as per the training syllabus prescribed by the manufacturer and which is approved by DGCA. The operator is also required to establish facilities in terms of Manpower, Space, Equipment, Spares, Consumables and Aircraft literature as per Civil Aviation Requirements. DGCA, after being satisfied of the capability of the operator for conducting operations, grants approval. The schedules are prepared in a manner that sufficient number of personnel will be trained before the aircraft are inducted into the fleet.

Reduction in Air fares

†2190. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of fares slashed each year by airlines operating in the country during the last three years in domestic and international flights separately;

(b) whether there is any proposal from any airlines for promoting domestic tourism by further slashing passenger fares of domestic flights; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE *OF* THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (c) Government does not regulate the air fares and airlines are free to determine the same in accordance with their commercial judgement and market forces.

Concessions in Air Fares to passengers

2191. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some private carriers are offering competitvely low fares for tickets booked in advance;

(b) whether the national air carriers will also extend such concessions to attract passengers;

(c) whether it is a fact that the occupancy rate has come down in national air carriers recently; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Indian Airlines is already offering APEX fares, an advance purchase scheme on specified domestic sectors.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Air services from Madhya Pradesh to Southern States

†2192. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to provide air services from Madhya Pradesh to South India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.